

Myth: *It is a good plan to start your wet-plate journey using clear glass plates.*

Of course you can, for sure, and clear single weight glass is cheap and readily available, but there's a better plan: Use, relatively inexpensive and not hard to come by these days, aluminum black Trophy Plates for your first wet-plate positive images. With these super easy, just peel the protective plastic sheeting off and pour your collodion on um, plates, there's no fuss, or muss! Using glass will require a lot of fuss and muss prepping them and meticulously cleaning them and later creating a black background for them to create a positive Ambrotype image. All that is skipped with the aluminum Trophy Plates. They are also a lot easier to cut and trim, as might be needed, than glass. Beginners are typically nervous and anxious when starting out anyway, let alone using a laboriously cleaned and prepped glass plate. With which, they are more likely to drop the proverbial ball, resulting in unnecessary discouragement. There's also the possibility that the glass didn't get cleaned well enough, causing hard for a beginner to diagnose, flaws on the image. Whereas the Trophy Aluminum plates (at least the silvery raw aluminum back ones) are nearly 100% fail safe. But, beware, because of their ease and convenience, aluminum trophy plates, called tintypes by some, but more accurately Aluminotypes, are being made today by thousands of wet-plate shooters by the box car loads. **Don't fall into the "aluminum clad rut"!** Once you have the basic process down well and it has become routine, it should be time to take off the training wheels, spread your wings and fly ever higher with glass and other more artistic, handmade, and, yes, challenging plate options from the past, present, and yet to be discovered!

Also, be aware that the wise beginner does not start out with 8x10 and bigger plates. Quarter plate or 4x5 are ideal beginner sizes, followed by 5x7.

And one more thing about Trophy Plates: Just like glass they can be reused. With the collodion of a no keeper image still wet, rub it all off, front and back while rinsing with fresh water. Dry the plate with soft paper towels immediately, to avoid water spots, and then give the plate a once over with a soft clean cotton rag soaked with denatured or grain alcohol. Next, rub it dry front and back with a soft paper towel, dust with canned air, and its ready to go back to work for you. That's significantly easier than what is required to reuse glass.